GOSSIP OF THE DRAMA FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW

Stage and Morals.

A Scholar's View of the Union Between the Two. An Unfavorable Appraisement of Today's Dramatic Art.

THE present state of dramatic art in this country hardly warrants optimism. Thus writes Henry Davies, lecturer on esthetics in Yale University. Our trouble is not an inadequate knowledge of the splendid achievements of the past. Nor does it seem to be a lack of insight into the sources of enjoyment afforded by the present. It lies rather in our lack of a clear conception of the relation of art to morals, a fact which naturally cuts us off from the best in the past, and lowers the standard of the stage as we now know it.

It may be assumed, in this critical review, continues Prof. Davies, that dramatic art depends for its power and permanence, as art, upon its ability to stir our emotions and to instruct our minds through speech and action, so that we are led to form sound judgments about life. The drama that does not both please and instruct, that does not compel a judgment of approval or disapproval at the same time that it kindles our senses with the pleasing mask of acing, is, I take it, defective drama.

Not that certain forms of acting—vaudeville, for example—may not make pleasure more obviously the object than instruction. This is freely admitted. But even these more imitative forms of dramatic art cannot be artistic, and simply amuse us, without injuring the influence of the stage. It is not only false as art, but it is bad morals—and bad art is always bad morals—for all art, and therefore dramatic art, must hold up the mirror of truth to life and make us pleased with the portrayal.

America Is Still Crude.

We are, esthetically, a very crude nation. Our taste is still decidedly imitative and sensual, fond of show—spectacular. It is also true that we are daringly experimental, and use every means to familiarize ourselves with the materials and possibilities of art. We certainly have a great future, especially in dramatic and musical art.

But at present the imitative and the sensual have the boards. The bulk of plays recently produced on American soil are light, realistic, mirthful, representing no special philosophy of life; they are written to charm and amuse, not to impress us morally.

Even the dramatization of successful novels, which has recently usurped the place of independent creation in dramatic literature, has only operated to confirm this tendency. The practice is leading to the confusion of literary forms. For the novelist today must consider the chances he has of having his work reset for stage purposes, and this tends to turn the novelist into a play writer. On the other hand, the playwriter tends to become the mere adapter of other men's creations, and so the freedom of creation is curtailed. In either case the stage suffers in its morale.

A Sign by the Way.

The effect of these things on the taste of the theater-going public is not altogether beneficial. A play like "The Little Minister," for example, considered in itself, can have only good influences on an audience; but, after all, is it art? Is the dramatized novel creative stage work or only adaptation?

For moral effect a novel may be staged; but for the highest dramatic effect the dramatized novel is never anything more than a temporary and partial success. Such plays fail of permanence—and will continue to fail—because the artist creates at second hand. A more serious fault lies in the fact that when the novel becomes a play it steps out of its own legitimate field of the imagination and ceases to be art, in order to become a sensuous reality.

Only a nation that reads practically nothing but novels will accept its plays thus at second hand. This is a sign of our crudity in matters of art. It is more than doubtful if the Russians or Germans would value a play like Hall Caine's "The Christian," or even "Quo Vadis," as staged among us.

The Need for Seriousness.

The present condition of dramatic art, as represented by the stage, shows that what is lacking is a serious motive to create true works of art, a purpose to instruct as well as amuse. It shows as well that a serious public is lacking It is these persons that are involved in the task of raising the stage to its position as a moral institution. Let us see how.

Genuine Dramatic Literature.

The first condition of improvement is, of course, the production of a genuine dramatic literature, built upon the best models, reflecting the ideal of beauty, and yet representing life; a literature that shall not be ashamed of comparison with the classics, and at the same time be true to its own psychological and sociological climate; a literature that is sufficient as art and at the same time concrete enough for practical purposes; a literature that by its very spirit and diction tends to dignify the actor in his own sight and raise the taste of the public that witnesses its interpretation.

That such a literature is lacking is to be accounted for, primarily, by the fact that the motive to its creation is lacking. The practical playwriter, indeed, doubts if such a literature can be produced in our time. He argues that a play should not aim at literary perfection, nor seek to convey moral impressions. It should simply portray life as it is and leave the judgment of the observer to condemn or approve its morals. The controversy over "Sapho" showed this.

There are, as the playwriter knows, limits to this view which have been defined in our law books and beyond which he dare not step without punishment. And I take exception with him on still deeper ground.

The error of realism, from which our drama is suffering, consists in omitting from its view the higher nature of man. Now it is safe to say, I think, that no artist can create a work of enduring merit by limiting himself to this "higher" nature, or by studying only moral effect. The contention of realism is true so far as it goes; the material of art is life, life as we know it in its length, breadth, depth, and height; but life, the realist often fails to see, can be interpreted only from this, the vacuity of realism becomes so obvious that the ponderous claim about "life as it really it" becomes nothing but an illusion. The prick of sensation in art, as Prof. James says, is the intrusion of the personal, and the essence of personality is moral struggle. If, therefore, the playwriter would create a dramatic literature that truly interprets life, he must puncture the impersonal realism so much affected in his practice and depict life as a conflict of character, or moral idealism.

Morals and Art.

But, the play-writer argues, shifting his base, dramatic art must often represent life without reference to the moral ideal, because the life of average humanity often lacks it and because "the public" resents its intrusion. It is such contentions as these that try the moral fiber of play-writers; and it is not surprising, perhaps, considering poor human nature, that they mostly yield their assent. The idea seems to be that the stage is to mirror actuality without reference to a final cause or moral motive.

Now, whatever may be the verdict of "the public," such representations cannot be considered good art; for bad morals is always bad art; nor would such plays be judged good by any properly qualified audience. In other words, the play-writer is bound to consider, not only the morals of his own creations, but also the effect such creations are likely to have on the morals of the public.

This is a point in criticism too little reflected upon by play-writers and actors alike. All the fine spiritual subtlety of the drama is involved in it. I am not going beyond my book when I say that the great bulk of modern plays leaves the audience without any bracing sense of the meaning and value of life, but rather with a feeling of surfeit, as though the digestion had been overtaxed.

How different the clear air of a Shakespearean comedy! How spontaneous, free, lifelike, it all is! What a fine sense of proportion and finality is displayed!

The contention of the modern playwriter that the average morality of the public does not permit the enjoyment of moral and elevating drama; that his business is to portray life as it is, is only the error of realism over again. The contention, at bottom (and here I return to my original point), involves the moral responsibility of the playwriter.

Is it the duty of the dramatist to create permanent literature if he can, or is realism the true point of view? For my own part, as a critic, I do not hesitate to oppose the latter claim. As regards the former, the situation is plainly this: the noblest dramatic art bases itself on the higher motives. Given these motives, dramatic artists will naturally interpret life in terms of idealism; they will capture our senses only to reach our minds, and thence penetrate to the sanctuary of the soul.

The plays produced under these conditions could not fail to elevate the stage. That the main drift of dramatic art is still sensual, pandering to the realistic idol, is due, in large measure, to the realistic atmosphere of a modern play.

The Actor's Responsibility.

Next to the creation of a dramatic literature free from the taint of servitude to realism, I think the largest responsibility for the reform of the theater rests with the actor. Personal experience leads me to believe that, in many important respects, the actor is as great a factor as the play-writers; for he has his freedom to reject a play that is not thoroughly artistic. But the fact that actors study what the public want shows that they, too, have made the fatal compromise which tends to lower the influence of the stage as a moral institution. And for the most part he finds that realism suits the spirit of the age, and realism, therefore, he will give his audiences.

The consequence is, acting tends to become affected, strained, and unnatural—in a word, impersonal. Compare with this the acting of Booth or Barrett, which was thoroughly imbued with their own personality; it was sincere earnest, even noble. We meet here, on the ground of the actor, the same problem that we met on the ground of the playwriter—the problem of realism and idealism.

Literature or Realism?

It is one of the nicest question in dramatic esthetics whether actors should hide their personalities in the part played, or whether their own ideals should penetrate it. Differently stated: Should the actor be indifferent to his role, yet concerned to produce the right effect on the audience; or should he support his role with his own emotions, presuming they are the emotions appropriate to the part played? This question has been ably discussed by one of the best of modern critics, Mr. William Archer, in his little work entitled "Masks and Faces." The reply, in general terms, seems to be as follows: Those actors produce the most artistic influence who are most successful in assuming, through sympathy, a perfect moral identity with the part they play, and think, after this relation has been established, of how to transmit their ideals to the audience; technique is second only to interpretation.

The true actor thinks first of his own ideals of life and character; it is his task "to create the part,"—a work in which he may often go beyond anything dreamed of by the play-writer. Now, this is a great undertaking, and the way it is done is the sure index to the conscientious work of the actor, for he has not only to make others realize the interior character of his impersonation, but he has also to conceive and carry the organism of the play and the preconceived dramatic goal of the composition in his mind as well. He has to do this without devitalizing either side—a task which requires not only a well-trained esthetic intelligence, but moral insight of the highest kind as well.

Now, on the presupposition of realism the actor need not trouble himself about these complex questions. All he has to do is to hold up life as it is, to sink his own feelings; his part is a "mask," not literally a "face." I have already pointed out the error of this philosophy—its superficiality; and to it we may trace the absence of great actors on the stage today. True actors have invariably been idealists; that is, they have been artists as well as actors. Such do always impart an element of idealism, a dignity and moral value to any part they interpret, because they bring to it, not only good training, sound technique, but also sincere purpose, large interpretative imagination, and a feeling for fitness of things on the stage.

The educative influence of the stage is so great that the loss of the ideal side of the actor's art is missed more quickly there than anywhere. Actors must, therefore, lay this lesson to heart, that if they would elevate the taste of the people, if they would change the mode of judging life, it must be by the influence of a nobly played part. The actor's "mask" should actually be a "face," in which the observer, his senses kindled and captured, sees the play of conflicting standards, and, by what he sess, is pleased and instructed—led, in a word, to form a healthy and sound judgment of art and life.

The Voice of the People.

But there is another and final condition of reform—the education of public taste. The responsibility for the degenerate tendencies of the drama does not rest wholly on the play-writer and actor. The people, the great public—whose infallibility is not so unquestionable as certain French critics would have us believe—quite as often fail to appreciate the better kind of play through lack of dramatic education and overwork. The latter cause—the fact that people are too tired in these days for serious drama—naturally creates the demand for amusement rather an instruction; though I think this demand is greatly exaggerated.

We still remain, however, pathetically blind to the glories of Shakespeare, and conventional and unintelligent in regard to grand opera. Whether this state of things continues depends somewhat upon the question whether the strenuous commercialism of modern life continues, and whether we shall settle down to new and more worthy ideals of social evolution after the present acute phase of progress shall have been passed. Whilst it lasts the public is unfitted, by its habits of life, to enter into the higher and nobler elements of the drama; amusement is the chief need of our times and natures.

How to Create Right Tastes.

My hopes and fears for dramatic art center round the task of creating right tastes among the people. This is a large work, which some have already prejudged to be impossible of consummation, but without proper investigation. The stage will never lose its hold on the public. The only question is where to begin to make it the vehicle of the best influences. Now I think three things are obvious here.

In the first place, much can be expected from the gradual introduction of art studies into our schools, colleges, and universities. The drama has not yet come in for its share of attention but it surely will, as soon as our teachers are as wise as Froebel and Pestalozzi. Surely the time is not far distant when a man's education will include so much knowledge of art as will enable him to judge what is good drama, or to come to it able to feel highly, and judge its nobler qualities. An intelligent recognition of the equality of esthetic with ethic and logic as a "culture-interest" is a step which is as inevitable as the progress of human thought, and I cannot see why this step should not be taken soon. What is needed is money to endow "chairs" in our universities devoted to the study and teaching of matters relating to the culture of the feelings. Here is, indeed, a new and attractive field for our millionaires. Pious founders in the past gave their money to endow chairs of logic, metaphysics, and theology. There are, perhaps, enough of these, at least for the present. But art is hardly even recognized in the modern university, and we wonder at the low state of the public taste!

OTIS SKINNER, Who Is to Star Jointly With Ada Rehan in Standard Plays.

Keep Close to Life!

Another step which would greatly aid the recovery of the moral functions of the stage is the cultivation of closer relations with other institutions which have direct bearing on the education of public taste.

The weakness of the stage is due largely to its isolation; it often lacks the interest which comes from close contact with the life of the people; modest and sensible people often think of it as a sort of hothouse where nothing but exotics are raised. How true this judgment is is seen from the biographies of actors, which, for the most part, are melancholy reading.

Let the stage and the dramatic profession keep close to the life of men. Let them not despise any institution which shapes in any way, however small, the tastes of the public. The stage can learn something for its own good from the church, the political meeting, the struggle of the democracy for supremacy, and from the world-movements which stir the heart of humanity in these days.

The Personal Debt to Art.

Finally, we should form the habit of attending only the best dramatic performances and exert our influence against any and all forms of the degradation of the stage. If people of intelligence and culture were more positive in approving good plays, bad ones will be more easily crowded out. The moral elevation of the stage depends upon the encouragement offered to the best in dramatic creation and acting, and if those best able to judge are not outspoken in approval where there is merit, how shall the public know what lead to follow?

These are but the merest hints in this great problem, but I think that if they were followed the stage would gradually feel a new spirit taking possession of it, the outward and visible token of which would be, first, an independent dramatic literature bearing the marks not only of patient labor, but of inspiration; and, second, a new type of acting completely worthy of the best traditions of the profession. At present, it is to be feared, other influences prevail, though the outcome can hardly be in doubt, for art can never die. It springs, phoenix-like, out of the dead forms of unproductive periods, and, with fewer inventions of beauty, resumes its pristine influence over men. So surely will it be with the modern stage when its moral mission is fully appreciated by the play-writer, actor, and public.—The Critic.

Leon Espinosa Dead.

The death of Leon Espinosa, which occurred in London the other day, has removed a figure which played a prominent part in theatrical life, both before and behind the scenes, for half a century. In his younger days he was famous as a dancer and in his later years as an inventor of dances and ballets.

His name was associated intimately with the spectacular triumphs of many of the most noteworthy revivals of Charles Kean and Sir Henry Irving, and with some of the most dazzling scenes ever exhibited at Covent Garden or the Her Majesty's of former days. He war at the Lyceum with Sir Henry Irving for eleven years.

The wonderful pictures in "Robespierre" were the result of some of his latest work.

Mrs. Pat Campbell as Beata.

London Critics On Her Appearance in "The Joy of Living."

American playgoers are likely to be interested in the London opinions of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's performance of "The Joy of Living," since she appeared in the English translation of the Sudermann play not only at the Garden Theater in New York, but elsewhere throughout the country. Says the "Daily Telegraph:" "Mrs. Patrick Campbell, freshly returned from her triumphs in the American continent, appeared once more last night before the English public in a character which in many respects is adapted to her quick, eager, sensitive personality.

"Sudermann's play, 'The Joy of Living,' has about it singularly little joy, and leads up to death. It is a gloomy play, full of ideas of punishment for early wrongdoing, of remorse for contravention of social codes, above all, of the alternate exaltation and depression of a highly nervous and excitable woman. It is not the first time that Mrs. Campbell has shown that she can illustrate with artistic insight the character of the heroine highly charged with nervous and electrical force.

"Of the three great artists who have played in Sudermann's 'Magda,' Sarah Bernhardt, Eleanora Duse, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the last is probably the best of the three—a notable triumph for an English actress, and one which redounds to the honor of our stage."

"Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Beata does not seem so exclusively German as do her bearded associates," says the "Standard's" critic, "but she plays so well that the attraction the character had for her is readily explained. Her tenderness to her daughter and to Norbert, her stanch affection for Richard, and the discrimination shown in her manner to her husband, are all to the purpose. The emotion, no longer to be repressed, which forces her to interrupt her lover's denial and pledge, was finely indicated, and so was the dazed suffering of her subsequent scene with Richard in the latter's house.

"A mistake, however, was made in obtaining a laugh at a most inappropriate moment—when rereading an old love letter she had written. An expression in it strikes her as neat, and her 'Not so bad, you know,' seemed quite out of place. Martin Harvey imparts dignity and earnestness to his Richard von Volkerlingk; the drama received every advantage that a sound interpretation of this important part could give it."

The "Chronicle" says:

"For Mrs. Campbell the part of Beata is scarcely likely to prove another Magda, although toward the close, when the guilty wife sacrifices herself in order not only that her lover may live to pursue the splendid career she believes awaits him, but that his son and her daughter may be happy together, there is scope for the display of her emotional power. In each of its varying phases she understands the character, which is exceedingly difficult and not always telling."

"Medee" a Notable Work.

Is a Drama of Classic Character and Deep Feeling.

According to a Paris note in the "Chronicle," "Medee," produced at the Comedie Francaise, will greatly add to the literary and poetic reputation of M. Catulle Mendes.

The author rightly describes it as a drama, for he has left the paths of inspiration followed by Euripides, and by condensing the action into three acts has given his work all the thrilling poignancy of a medieval rather than a mythical romance. The episodes of "Medee," dramatized in Greek, Latin, French, and English, need not be repeated, and M. Catulle Mendes deserves special merit for his courage in choosing the tragic love and revenge of the sorceress of Colchis. History, indeed, repeats itself so strangely that the keenly appreciative audience seemed to have the sanguinary mirage of the Servian capital before it during the scene of the murder of the aged King Creon and his daughter Creusa.

The verse of the French poet is melodious and full of passion, and the acting of Mme. Segond-Weber was worthy of the stage upon which former queens of tragedy have declaimed. As Jason, M. Albert Lambert admirably depicted the mingling of perfidy and the amorous power of an inconstant lover. Mlle. Yvonne Garrick recited an ode as maiden of Corinth on the pranks of Cupid, which gave the impression of a passage in the "Midsummer Night's Dream." There is in truth a Shakespearean aroma all through this graceful and vivid poem.

A Theatrical Interview.

Much the Same in London as in America.

The theatrical interview abroad has much in common with its counterpart on this side of the water. Here are some of the impressions of a Standard man who visited Rejane behind the scenes:

"It is the duty of all good interviewers," he says, "when talking to representatives of a foreign nation, to fish for compliments for the British people. It is shameless, and not at all original, but of course it had to be done.

A Stock Question.

"'What do you think of the English public, Mme. Rejane?'

"'Ah! the English public I love, and they know it, I am sure.' And she smiled with a pleasant vivacity which assured one of the whole-hearted sincerity of the declaration.

"'Your public is the most attentive, the most sympathetic, before which I have ever played. I love to come to London; I am always at home in your theaters.'

"'I suppose the proportion of the audience able to follow the French varies a good deal?'

Feeling of Sympathy.

"'On certain days the public warms up more to the subject than at other times. That is so everywhere, not more in London than in Paris. But I always feel the sympathy of an English audience, and I have been here now many times.'

"'You find some plays more readily grasped than others?'

"'Oh, yes. A great deal depends on the play. Where the motive is clear and the dramatic interest strong, the language makes less difference. Tonight, for instance, the plot is obvious and all can follow it. Where the interest turns on mere word play or subtle distinctions of meaning of course it is more difficult to hold the audience.'

"'Is the examination of the prisoner and his wife by the juge d'instruction in "La Robe Rouge" a true picture of French legal procedure?'

Describes a Scene.

"'As it is? No. As it was until recently the play is a true study. But now a law has been passed entitling the accused to have counsel present for his defense during the examination. You must really see the third act,' went on Mme. Rejane. 'There is a great scene in it, a difficult case of conscience. The prosecuting counsel, after going into all the facts, becomes gradually convinced of the innocence of the prisoner. The trial is to him a great opportunity. He has been looking forward to it as the chance of making his mark, of showing how well he can handle the court and the jury. And now he sees that the exercise of his powers will mean the certain sending of an innocent wretch to his doom. He must stifle his conscience or stand revealed as an ignominious failure. It is a great scene. You must not miss seeing it.'

More Interesting Than Play.

"But Rejane, with her flashing eyes and wonderful flow of conversation, her infectious vitality which the passionate scene in court and the struggle with the gendarmes had left unimpaired, was more interesting than even the case of conscience of the worthy counsel in the third act. As she leaned almost upright on the couch and talked away it was plain she was good for a struggle with twenty gendarmes if occasion should need. The scene had taken less out of her than out of the flushed and eager spectators who had so wildly cheered at the end of the dramatic struggle."

The Stage Warbrobe Woman

Arduous Duties That Keep Her Busy Most of the Time.

"Yes, I fined her $1 and she deserved it. If a girl can't see a knot hole in the floor without sticking her parasol tip through it, she ought to be fined. That is the second parasol she has broken since we opened."

"But you could buy a new one for $2," persisted the chorus girl, her eyes full of angry tears.

"That is all you know about it. Those chiffon parasols cost $6 a piece, and $1 for having them cleaned only last week. That fine stands."

And the tall, strong-featured brunette in her black dress and embroidered apron, stalked away, while the little chorus girl patted her fluffy pompadour, counted the money in her salary envelope, and went her way, still wearing an injured expression.

The scene was the little den where Treasurer Comstock of the Casino pays off the members of "The Runaways" Company every Saturday.

A Trying Position.

"I wouldn't have that wardrobe woman's position for four times the salary she draws, and her salary is no trifle either," remarked a bystander. The costuming of a modern musical spectacle has completely altered the duties and status of the wardrobe mistress. She is now one of the most important personages around a theater, and has more responsibility after the show settles down for a run than the stage director himself.

When tinsel, cotton-backed satin, and spangles were accepted at par, a ruined costume represented but a trifling expenditure. Now, with Fifth Avenue modistes enhancing the beauty of show girls, and theatrical costumers trying to run things in competition with the most exclusive modistes the average up-to-date manager faces large bills.

First Cost Trifling.

The first cost of stage gowns does not tell the whole financial story, either. A woman in private life wears a party frock half a dozen times, having it handled carefully by her maid, laid away in tissue paper, and otherwise guarded against rough usage and dirt, yet after the sixth or seventh apperance she is apt to pronounce it passe. These stage gowns, made of fully as fragile materials, are subjected to the wear and tear of seven performances a week, during which a girl is too busy pleasing the audience to watch whether the next girl in the line is standing on her train or if the comedian has caught his button on her lace sash. And the duty of the wardrobe mistress is to keep these costumes in a presentable condition.

The dressers see that costumes are not thrown on hastily, carelessly fastened here with a pin and there with a string, and under their watchful eye, too, the girls refrain from tossing their gown in the corner when making a quick change.

The dressers note signs of wear in the gowns and report to the wardrobe mistress. If the rent is small or there is need of only a hook, and eye, or a bow, the dresser makes the repair during the performance. If more work is needed the gown is taken to the sewing room on the gallery floor, where it is repaired the next day. This room is lined with hooks and sheets of unbleached muslin, so that the dresses may be hung in orderly array, and be covered from the dust.

Here, too, are machines, dress forms, and long, narrow work tables. One man does nothing but spangling, and he is a narrow-necked, pale-faced foreigner, who sits silent among the bevy of sewing women who put on fresh accordion plaiting, new lace, or passementerie. Whenever a girl leaves the company her successor must be fitted, and often the costumes are made over, so that the wardrobe mistress must be able to direct fitters as well as repairers. Her weekly salary in the workroom varies from $50 to $100, the girls being paid by the day and employed only when needed. All supplies, such as thread, tape, hooks, and eyes, are bought in quantities.

An Expensive Item.

The most expensive repair item in the modern stage costume is what the dressmakers call the chiffon froufrou, which is the full plaiting that gives the flaring effect to a skirt. These are renewed constantly, and the wardrobe mistress is liable to draw anywhere from $25 to $50 for her day's shopping.

It is her duty also to see that the clothes go in time to the cleaner, and she sometimes sends out from twenty to forty dresses at once. Theatrical cleaners have a process suited to their needs, and gowns taken from the theater after the performance or very early the next morning are delivered in time for the next performance. The laundry work is gathered up twice a week, including the linen worn by the chorus men, and any costumes that will endure the stress of the tub.

Must Keep Moving.

But the most arduous duties of the wardrobe mistress come during the performance, when she seems almost omnipresent. She slips from dressing room to dressing room, from one side of the stage to the other. She it is who notes the careless girl who sits down on a dirty stairway without first raising her frock, fresh from the cleaner. She catches the girl whose idea of fun is to discipline her men friends in the chorus by slapping them with a white chiffon parasol and thereby accumulating rouge and makeup where it don't belong.

She goes through the dressing rooms after the performance and takes the the names of girls who forget to put their plumed hats into the boxes or to cover their gowns with sheets. She distributes fines varying from 50 cents to $2, and she can always account in the presence of the girl for the fine. She combines with a just sense of discipline rare executive ability and a keen knowledge of human nature.

Hours Are Long.

Her hours are long, especially when the play is just settling down for a run, because in addition to her hours at the theater she goes to the photographer's studio whenever the chorus girls are being posed. She orders the packing of their costumes, unpacks them at the studio, stands guard over them during the posing and sees that they are safely shipped back to the theater.

And this is the strangest part of her work. Martinet that she is, every girl in the show swears by her. She is relentless in case of a breach of discipline, but let anything happen to one of the girls, a fainting spell, a telegram bearing bad news, and the wardrobe mistress fairly bubbles sympathy of the most practical sort. She has a stock of simple remedies always at hand, she knows just what to do in case of emergency, and she is a master hand at inducing the management to provide a cab in case of real distress. I have heard a girl who said unprintable things over her fines beg like a child for this same wardrobe mistress when taken ill in her dressing room.

Lorna Doone Out of Date.

Another Great Story Which Has Been Worn Out by Much Hearing.

"The great stories of the world, most of them mythological in origin, and the great heroes who acted them, have a way of petering out as the times grow older, till sometimes they caper elegantly in operettas, and sometimes limp and languish through nerveless plays," according to one writer in the "Times."

"The process, no doubt, is natural; no doubt, all things considered, it was natural that Miss Annie Hughes' version of 'Lorna Doone,' presented at the first of the three matinees, should have but little left of the original stuff of the story.

"To Exmoor, Jan Ridd is a god, or at least a demigod; lineally descended, through countless different forms, from some primeval deity of strength, with new adventures fitted to the need of the times, but always with one pre-eminent characteristic, strength, force, vigor.

"At the Avenue he is an excellent young man with a gift for picturesque attitudes and for uttering irreproachable sentiments very largely in blank verse. And Lorna Doone is a pale young lady, also with a gift for blank verse and other meters, whose costume of the period of 1680 and frequent use of 'thee' and 'thou' cannot conceal the fact that she is desperately modern, even a little anaemic.

"It is not entirely Mr. Hayden Coffin's fault, nor Miss Lilian Eldee's, nor Miss Annie Hughes'; it is the spirit of the age that insists upon intruding into the most carefully built imitation of the antique. What has happened to the leading characters has happened to the story, too. It has petered out.

"True, we have ranting Doones and bludgeons and pistol shots and dead bodies; we have alarums and excursions; we even have, in the fourth act, a very unexpected case of burning alive